

Disregard What Doesn't Concern You



Spiritual progress requires us to highlight what is essential and to disregard everything else as trivial pursuits unworthy of our attention. Moreover, it is actually a good thing to be thought foolish and simple with regard to matters that don't concern us. Don't be concerned with other people's impressions of you. They are dazzled and deluded by appearances. Stick with your purpose. This alone will strengthen your will and give your life coherence.

Refrain from trying to win other people's approval and admiration. You are taking a higher road. Don't long for others to see you as sophisticated, unique, or wise. In fact, be suspicious if you appear to others as someone special. Be on your guard against a false sense of self-importance.

Keeping your will in harmony with truth and concerning yourself with what is beyond your control are mutually exclusive. While you are absorbed in one, you will neglect the other.

Conform Your Wishes to Reality



For good or for ill, life and nature are governed by laws that we can't change. The quicker we accept this, the more tranquil we can be. You would be foolish to wish that your children or your spouse would live forever. They are mortal, just as you are, and the law of mortality is completely out of your hands.

Similarly, it is foolish to wish that an employee, relative, or friend be without fault. This is wishing to control things that you can't truly control.

It is within our control not to be disappointed by our desires if we deal with them according to facts rather than by being swept away by them.

We are ultimately controlled by that which bestows what we seek or removes what we don't want. If it's freedom you seek, then wish nothing and shun nothing that depends on others, or you will always be a helpless slave.

Understand what freedom really is and how it is achieved. Freedom isn't the right or ability to do whatever you please. Freedom comes from understanding the limits of our own power and the natural limits set in place by divine providence. By accepting life's limits and inevitabilities and working with them rather than fighting them, we become free. If, on the other hand, we succumb to our passing desires for things that aren't in our control, freedom is lost.